



John Lott's Latest Survey Reveals More Voters Carrying Concealed

John Lott, head of the Crime Prevention Research Center, has done it again: [his latest survey reveals](#) that the number of registered voters now carrying a concealed firearm at least some of the time has tripled in just the last six years. How this might impact the upcoming presidential election was not addressed, but other data from his study prove that the Second Amendment is alive and well in America and could be a factor next November.

Most of the media predictably avoided saying much about his study, but those that did focused on one statistic: the number of permit holders declined last year. [Fox News](#), to its credit, tried to correct the misimpression:



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The number of concealed carry permit holders in the U.S. dropped slightly this year, but the number of Americans carrying a concealed firearm has likely increased overall due to more than half of U.S. states enacting laws that do not require eligible residents to obtain a permit, according to the author of a new study examining gun data.

That makes perfect sense. As more and more states go “constitutional carry” (i.e., “permitless carry”) why would someone want a permit? A small number would no doubt like to have a permit so they can legally carry in “reciprocal” states, but the rest are free to carry without a permit.

Still, the numbers are staggering, and most encouraging to those in the freedom fight who know how important an armed private citizenry is as a bulwark against confiscation and tyranny.

First, the “decline” is a rounding error. Lott’s study indicated a decline of less than 0.5 percent in the number of those with permits, and he admits that his data isn’t as reliable as he would like it to be.

Second, other factors must be considered in that minimal decline, i.e., the deaths of existing permit holders and inflation putting the cost of a firearm out of reach for some (particularly those in the inner cities, where gun violence is the most rampant and where present gun laws make it nearly impossible for law-abiding citizens to arm themselves). Complacency could also be a factor because of several recent victories of gun owners’ rights over the ATF’s war against them.

Here is more of the good news from Lott’s study:

- The United States unofficially became a “constitutional carry” nation this year after Alabama, Florida, and Nebraska enacted permitless carry laws;
- There are an estimated 22 million Americans with active concealed carry permits;



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- One in every 10 U.S. adults now holds a concealed carry permit;
- Women, Asians, and blacks “are increasingly turning to gun ownership,” according to Lott;
- More than 15 percent of general election voters carry a concealed firearm at least part of time, up from just 5 percent who did so in 2017;
- “Permit holders are convicted of any type of firearms-related violations at about 1/12th the rate that police officers are convicted ... and police officers are convicted at about 1/20th the rate of the general population ... [thus] permit holders are virtually never convicted of firearms-related violations”;
- While the number of permit holders has exploded over the past few years, violent crime, on average, has declined;
- Gun sales “have exploded since 2020, surging to the highest level in a decade”; and
- “Due to old and missing data, 21.8 million is undoubtedly an underestimate of the total number of Americans with permits.”

How does this square with the reliably reported increase in gun violence during the past few years? [In a separate study](#), Lott has the answer: that gun violence is very limited to a few counties in liberal states where gun control laws are the most restrictive. In January, Lott reported that some 73 percent of all murders in the United States took place in just 5 percent of U.S. counties, while 52 percent of all counties reported no murders at all. As Lott noted:

Murder isn't a nationwide problem. It's a problem in a small set of urban areas and even in those counties murders are concentrated in small areas inside them....

Cook County, Illinois, is just one of the 31 counties accounting for 42 percent of the murders in 2020, with 775 murders. It was followed closely by Los Angeles County, with 692.

In the just-released study, Lott revealed the predictable decrease in violent crime as more and more law-abiding citizens armed themselves. He reported:

At the same time that there has been an exponential growth in permits, there has been a general linear decline in rates of homicide and violent crime offenses....

The rate has dropped around 11% for the past two decades.

Violent crime fell from 5.23 per 10 million people in 1999 to 3.81 per 10 million people in 2022, a 27% drop. Meanwhile, the percentage of adults with permits soared by five-fold.

Lott asked, “What does this mean in practice?” He answered:

It means that in most places where people are allowed to carry a concealed handgun, there will be someone carrying a concealed handgun.

If the probability that any one person has a concealed handgun permit is 5.4%, in a room with 10 people (assuming that the probabilities are independent), the probability that at least one person will have a permitted concealed handgun is 43%.

In a room with 20 people, that probability goes up to 67%. With 40, that probability rises to 89%.



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That bodes ill for a deranged shooter seeking a large crowd to attack, knowing that someone in that crowd is increasingly likely to be able to defend himself and others with a firearm. The shooter may be deranged, but he most likely isn't stupid, and will find his plans increasingly frustrated and large crowds safer.

That, at bottom, is the good news coming from Lott and his Crime Prevention Research Center's latest study: more guns, less crime.



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